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**STATE OF VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

MEDIA RELEASE

**DPS ENCOURAGES VERMONTERS TO PLAN AHEAD FOR THE
UPCOMING HEATING SEASON**

Montpelier, VT -- "Although this isn't a time when anyone likes to think about winter, now is the time when Vermonters should plan ahead for the coming heating season," said Commissioner David O'Brien of Vermont's Department of Public Service. "I'm concerned about the potential for high fuel prices this year and encourage Vermont citizens to do whatever they can to plan ahead."

One way Vermonters can plan for the upcoming heating season is by contacting their fuel dealer to see if they offer a "price protection" program. This may include "Pre-Buy" programs where customers purchase a specified volume of fuel at a discounted price; "Fixed Price" programs, where a pre-determined price is set for all fuel delivered during the heating season; or "Cap" programs, where the fuel price will not exceed a pre-determined value, and may go down based on market conditions. Cap and Fixed Price programs may be part of "Budget" programs in which the customer agrees to make equal monthly payments, often for 10 to 12 months.

The Department of Public Service recently conducted a survey of fuel dealers price protection programs and of the 70 dealers surveyed, approximately 50% were offering some type of program. The average price for heating oil pre-buy programs was \$2.14 and the average price for propane pre-buy programs was \$1.77. Some fuel dealers indicated that their price protection plans will end in July, and others indicated they will delay offering their programs until August or possibly later.

"I would encourage residents to contact their fuel dealer to find out about their price protection programs and determine if what they offer is right for them," said Commissioner O'Brien. "However, price protection programs don't guarantee savings so Vermonters need to consider their options carefully. We all need to be informed consumers."

Additional tips for planning ahead for the upcoming heating season include: buying and drying out wood for fuel; performing any needed chimney maintenance; and budgeting for higher fuel bills.

Additional information on fuel prices and price protections programs is available online in the Vermont Fuel Price report at <http://publicservice.vermont.gov/pub/vt-fuel-price-report.html>

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